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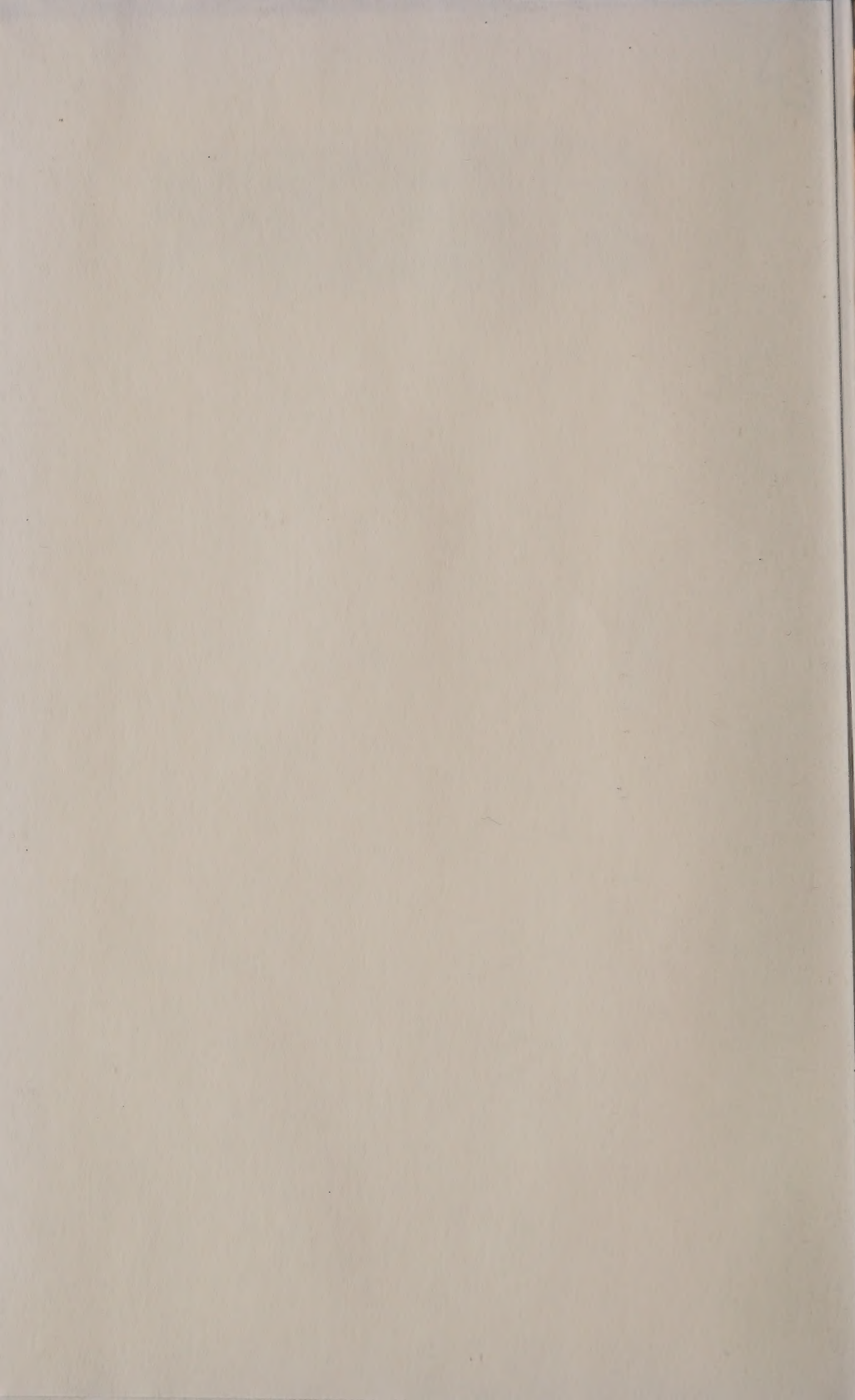
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A handbook to help acquaint
you with First Presbyterian
Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana

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A Handbook

To Help Acquaint You with
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Fort Wayne, Indiana

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
WAYNE & WEBSTER STS.
FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Fort Wayne, Indiana



INDEX

Chapter		Page
I	Why Did I Join Church?	3
II	What Is A Presbyterian Church?	5
III	How Does A Presbyterian Church Work?	9
IV	How Big Is the Presbyterian Church?	13
V	What Is Different About First Church?	17
VI	What Is the Program of First Church?	23
VII	Who and What is the Staff?.....	29
VIII	What Is the Story of Our Building?	33
IX	What Are the Financial Facts of Life?	37
X	What Else Is There to Know?	41

INDEX

Page	Chapter
1	I. What is a book?
2	II. What is a book?
3	III. What is a book?
4	IV. What is a book?
5	V. What is a book?
6	VI. What is a book?
7	VII. What is a book?
8	VIII. What is a book?
9	IX. What is a book?
10	X. What is a book?
11	XI. What is a book?
12	XII. What is a book?
13	XIII. What is a book?
14	XIV. What is a book?
15	XV. What is a book?
16	XVI. What is a book?
17	XVII. What is a book?
18	XVIII. What is a book?
19	XIX. What is a book?
20	XX. What is a book?

A Personal Word

THIS BOOK is intended to answer questions—questions which you may have about your Church.

Some of them are personal questions: How may I most easily talk with one of my pastors? How may I become a part of the choir? . . . or the ushers? . . . or a prayer cell? . . . or the Women's Association? . . . or a Couples' Club? How do I arrange for a baptism? . . . a wedding? . . . a private celebration of the Lord's Supper? . . . a funeral? . . . a pastoral call?

Some of them are practical questions: Who may use the Church buildings? Is there a fee? How are officers elected? Why is First Church so often in the middle of community issues? Where do the dollars come from that enable First Church to do its work?

Some of them are theological questions: Why is divine worship more formal than in many other United Presbyterian Churches? When do we celebrate Holy Communion and Baptism? What do the symbols in the Sanctuary mean?

This attempt to answer your questions reflects the desire of the Session to help every member of First Church to feel "at home" in our Church. We hope that the information in this *Handbook* will enable you to make the best use of First Church in developing your discipleship. If these pages leave questions unanswered they will still serve their purpose if they prompt you to talk about such matters with a member of the Staff or Session.

While this *Handbook* is prepared at the direction of the Session, it could not have come into being without the First Presbyterian Church Foundation.

The Foundation was chartered in 1925 ". . . to promote religious, educational and charitable purposes among the present and future members of said Church, their children and their neighbors; and . . . to promote the cause of Christianity in and about the City of Fort Wayne." Thus the Foundation enables us to continue our service to Christ and His Church long after we have died. This *Handbook* is one sample of such continuing service. The Board of Directors of the Foundation has underwritten the *Handbook* as a living memorial to all who have contributed to the Foundation—both those who are at home with the Father and those who wait with us for His coming.

**THIS HANDBOOK
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
TO THOSE WHOSE CONTINUING FAITHFULNESS
HAVE BROUGHT IT INTO BEING**

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Revelation 14.13

We dedicate this HANDBOOK to these persons who have made gifts to the First Presbyterian Church Foundation and to the several persons contributing to the Foundation who request anonymity:

John H. Abercrombie
Mary E. Abercrombie
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I.

Why Did I Join Church?

THIS IS something of a “catch” question. You probably do not remember why you joined the Church. Of this we can be certain: The reason you joined was *your* reason and not anyone else’s. In all probability it was not a good reason! One of our most mature Elders recalls that he joined Church in order to see a certain girl who sang in the choir . . . and he one day married her.

For most of us the profoundest aspect of joining Church is that it represents an honest *intention*. One is not a full-grown Christian the moment he becomes a Church member. He publicly confesses that he accepts Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour—but he knows this confession is an intention, not an accomplishment. He intends to become a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth.

In this sense the question, “Why did I join Church?” is not important. This is the truly important question: “What does Church membership mean to me *now*?” If our intention was genuine we shall *grow* in the Christ life. That is, our understanding of the mind of Christ, our companionship with God as we know Him in Christ, and our involvement in the work of Christ will be enlarged and enriched with each passing year. As we grow we shall cast away some notions of the Church and God and Christ. In their place will come larger and truer and more Biblical ones.

Here is one idea that we shall discard quite early: That the Church is a select community of the “saved.”

Somewhere the idea got started that the world is like a contaminated swamp and that the Church is like a pool of clear, fresh, life-giving water. The rest of mankind are then pictured as poor fish trying to survive in the dirty swamp, while Christians are the



fortunate fish who have been lifted into the life-giving water. The picture is not too convincing, even at first, because we recognize that we also live in the swamp-world. But the picture is lighted with a hope: that when we die we who have lived in the Church will find ourselves in eternal bliss while those who have lived only in the swamp will find themselves in eternal wretchedness.

We have not been Christians for long, however, until we begin to question this sort of picture. If God is omnipotent and all-loving, how could He *choose* to have only a few of His children saved from the swamp-world? What kind of justice is it that grants eternal blessedness to those who are already blessed? Would it not be fairer to reverse the score and let those who have known blessedness go to the state of wretchedness? If those in the Church are the “saved” then why don’t they act that way? Why is it that so often people outside the Church are more kind and generous than some who are inside the Church?

If the questions persist long enough we shall begin to search the Scriptures for a more authentic picture of the Church. Once we do that we make a startling discovery: *Christians are here for the sake of other people!* We are called “the salt of the earth”—and salt makes food taste more like it ought to taste. We are called “the light of the world”—and light enables us to see whatever it shines upon. We are called “the body of Christ”—and a body enables a person to accomplish his work in this realm of time and space. If we look long enough we discover something like eighty different pictures of the Church in the New Testament and they all suggest the same thing: Christians are here for the sake of other people.

St. Paul put it like this: “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.” Just as ambassadors represent their native country in foreign territory—serving their ruler and promoting their homeland, so Christians represent God and His Kingdom in a world alienated from God. Since God has made his purpose for the world known to us—namely, to reconcile the world to himself—we are his servants and co-workers in the accomplishment of His purpose.

Jesus, of course, put it better than anyone else. “Whoever would save his life,” He said, “will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” If anyone joins the Church in order to be counted among the community of the “saved”—and continues in that belief—he has already lost his life. He can find full, abundant, eternal life only as he loses his life for the sake of Christ—when he gives



himself utterly to the service of Christ. That means—and this is the shocking discovery—serving the people whom Christ served and for whom He died. Since He died for all men, we are called to serve the needs of all people. In the measure that we lose our life for him we are “being saved.”

We are here for the sake of other people.

This understanding of the Church explains the multitude of activities and programs in First Church. Every one of them has one purpose: To help our members become more effective servants of other people. There may be other purposes, but they will always be subsidiary to this central purpose. Thus, for example, the purpose of divine worship is not to make us “feel real good” but to equip us for daily discipleship; the purpose of a pastoral call is not to flatter an egocentric parishioner but to assist that parishioner to be a more faithful witness to Christ; the purpose of a social hour is not to fill up free time but to give expression to Christian fellowship.

Why you joined First Church, then, is not ultimately too important. Our concern is that you share our vision of the Church as God’s chosen instrument for transforming the world and heralding the advent of His Kingdom.

II.

What Is A Presbyterian Church?

WHENEVER we confess our faith with the Apostles' Creed we say, "I believe in . . . the Holy Catholic Church." The word "catholic" means "universal" or "ecumenical." This affirmation is our way of saying that all denominations and communions in which God's Word is truly preached and Christ's sacraments are faithfully administered are authentic expressions of the Church.

It is also our way of saying that we Presbyterians make no claim of being the only true Church. So far from that, we have sought to implement an answer to our Lord's prayer the night before He died when He prayed that His disciples would "all be one." Our leaders from John Calvin to our present Stated Clerk have been among that company of churchmen who promote church cooperation, organic union of the churches, and the ecumenical movement. Thus "The Blake Proposal" to merge four major denominations is named for Eugene Carson Blake, our Stated Clerk and originator of the plan. Our denomination is one of the foremost members of the Indiana Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches, and the World Council of Churches. First Church is an active member of the Associated Churches of Fort Wayne. This urge to cooperate with other churches and to encourage organic union of the churches is one of our most distinctive marks.

Another distinctive trait is implied in our name, "Presbyterian." This word derives from the Greek word "presbyter," which means "elder," and refers to our form of organization or government.

A major drive of the Reformation was the desire to "re-form" the Church after the pattern of the apostolic Church. This called for fresh studies of the New Testament to discover the characteristics of the Church in its first generations. Calvin, who was trained in the law, was impressed with the fact that many New Testament churches apparently adapted for themselves the form of government practiced among the synagogues from which they had emerged. This was essentially "representative democracy"—a system by which the congregation elected from its own membership a group of men to exercise the rule over them. These men were called "presbyters" or "elders." Since Calvin led his colleagues and successors in establishing this form of government in the churches related to them, adherents of these churches soon came to be known as "Presbyterians."



Our insistence upon representative democracy has influenced church life beyond our own denomination. Only two other forms of government have ever been viable options for the churches: "congregational"—government by pure democracy and typified in such churches as the Baptists, Disciples, and Congregationalists; and "episcopal"—government by a hierarchy (the word means "bishop") and typified in such churches as the Methodist, Episcopal, and Roman Catholic. The rise of our urban and technological civilization has weakened the pragmatic value of the "congregational" system, and the rise of the democratic spirit has weakened the appeal of the "episcopal" system. The result has been a frequently recognized tendency for both extremes to move toward the center—"episcopal" churches limiting the power of bishops and "congregational" churches delegating responsibilities to executive officers. While the "presbyterian" form is not perfect, it does include many of the best features of the other two systems.

This is an appropriate place to mention that persons who come to First Church from another denomination frequently find our form of government disconcerting. If they come from a "congregational" type church they are understandably surprised—and perhaps disturbed—when the Session makes far-reaching decisions without calling for a vote of the members. But they are no more surprised or disturbed than those who come from an "episcopal" type church when the Congregation is asked to decide who should be the pastor. However, if persons with non-presbyterian backgrounds will share their questions and concerns with a member of the Staff or Session they will almost certainly receive satisfying explanations for our procedures in governing the church body.

One reason for this is to be found in our national culture. The influence of Presbyterians upon our national life has far exceeded our numerical strength. The War of the American Revolution, for example, was frequently dubbed "The Presbyterian Rebellion"—both because of the dominant role of Presbyterians and because it was a struggle for representative democracy. It is noteworthy that the only clergyman to sign the Declaration of Independence was a Presbyterian minister, John Witherspoon. The Constitution of our nation and our denomination are contemporaneous documents written in the same city. Thus many distinctively Presbyterian contributions to our national culture are by now so completely identified with our country that most persons either take them for granted or suppose that they are peculiarly "American." As a result, however, when we encounter essentially the same procedures in our Church life we find them familiar and acceptable even if they are different from the procedures in the Church we have known.

A third distinctive trait of us Presbyterians derives from our

Reformed theology—our thorough-going emphasis upon the sovereignty of God. All Christians believe that God is sovereign, but those of us who belong to the family of Reformed Churches—those branches of the Church which were revitalized by the Reformation on the European continent in the seventeenth century—stress this belief more than do most.

We believe that God is sovereign Lord of all life. Like the prophets of the Old Testament, we reject all attempts to separate into the “sacred” and the “secular” or the “holy” and the “profane.” Such attempts delegate the “secular” or “profane” to the authorities of the world and limit the Church’s concern to those things which are “sacred” or “holy.” We must reject such attempts, for “the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.” He desires justice and mercy, not religious magic. We stand with the men of the New Testament—men like John who wrote, “God so loved the *world* that he gave His only Son . . . that the *world* might be saved”—and men like Peter who discovered that “with God nothing is common or unclean.” We keep company with the worthies of our Reformed heritage—men like John Calvin, John Knox, and John Witherspoon—all of whom expressed their religious faith in God’s sovereign rule in the terms of practical, everyday politics.

Because He is sovereign, “God alone is Lord of the conscience.” Hence, each person lives his life under the direct judgment of God. The Church seeks to guide the faithful to an understanding of what God demands, but the Church does not substitute itself for God.

God is also sovereign over all the orders of human life—institutions like the family, the nation, and the Church. Every order is ordained by God for specific functions, and stands under divine judgment if it fails in its functions. One function of the Church is to proclaim the word of judgment upon itself and all other orders.

Reading of these distinctive traits will come as news to many Presbyterians. If you are one of them, do not be too surprised. We live in a generation when differences in religious convictions tend to be blurred, ignored, or denied. Insofar as this tendency results from a genuinely human concern with weightier matters, it is a happy development. Unfortunately, however, it more often results from more base causes: what we often call “tolerance” but what is really indifference; exaltation of “faith” but without any concern for the object of faith; development of an “American religion” which is a blasphemous mixture of elements of Judaism, Romanism, and Protestantism. Insofar as the tendency results from such causes it represents a lack of vital Christianity and is to be deplored.

There is another reason that a description of our distinctive traits may come as a surprise. When a person petitions for membership in

a Presbyterian Church the Session bases its response upon one question: "Do you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, and do you promise, in reliance upon the grace of God, to be His faithful disciple to your life's end?" There need be no inquiry concerning the petitioner's views of the Church, of the Presbyterian form of government, or of the sovereignty of God. As a result, many persons become members without any firm conviction regarding these distinctive traits. This is not accidental, but quite deliberate. We believe that the Holy Catholic Church includes all who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. We cannot, therefore, deny membership to any who will make this confession.

The government of the Presbyterian Church, however, is entrusted only to those who are ordained as "teaching elders" whom we call the clergy and as "ruling elders" whom we simply call Elders. When a person is ordained he must answer other questions, and his affirmative answers to these questions cause him to endorse as his own these convictions which have been the characteristic marks of Presbyterianism. The responsibility for teaching and maintaining our distinctive tradition thus becomes in a special way the responsibility of our ordained officers.

In such a discussion of our distinctive features we confront a paradox. We can make our greatest contribution to the extension of the total Christian enterprise when we understand and appreciate our distinctive Presbyterian heritage.



III.

How Does A Presbyterian Church Work?

THE SUPERVISION of a Presbyterian Church is entrusted to the Session, which is the Elders plus the pastor. That "plus" is important. If all the Elders are present but the pastor is absent, then they do not comprise the Session and they have no authority whatsoever. He must be present and acting as moderator before the Session comes into being. (There is only one exception. If he must be absent, the pastor may appoint another clergyman from his presbytery to serve as moderator.) In other words, the Session is an organic unit—several members but one body. This is the reason that when men are ordained as Elders their colleagues greet them with this sentence: "We give you the right hand of fellowship to take part of this office with us." It is one office shared by several persons.

The oversight which is entrusted to the Session is virtually complete. It is "charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the congregation, for which purpose it has power: to inquire into the knowledge and Christian conduct of the members . . . ; to call before it offenders and witnesses . . . ; to instruct parents who are communicants to present their children for baptism; to decide who shall be members of the church . . . ; to grant certificates of dismissal to other churches . . . ; to admonish, to rebuke, to suspend or exclude from the sacraments those who are found to deserve censure; to concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the congregation; to supervise the church school, the work of the deacons and the trustees, and all the societies or agencies of the congregation; to participate with the minister in the examination, ordination, and installation of ruling elders and deacons, on their election by the congregation; and to appoint representatives to higher judicatories . . ."

Further, the Session has "exclusive authority over the worship of the congregation . . . and over the uses to which the church buildings and properties may be put . . . It is their duty also to develop the grace of liberality in the members . . . The offerings of the church school and all the societies or agencies of the church must be reported regularly to the Session for approval." (Form of Government, chapter XI).

There is only one place in the Church where the Session has no authority—the pulpit. The preacher is prince of the pulpit! He is responsible only to the Presbytery.

In this connection, it is worth noting that the Session is also responsible to the Presbytery, which supervises and reviews its actions. This does not mean, of course, that the Session is insensitive to

the wishes of the congregation. It means, rather, that the Session is responsible to the Presbytery to lead the congregation in a Presbyterian program of worship, education, fellowship, and benevolence as developed by the Church as a whole.

The Session may be virtually as large as the Congregation desires. In First Church the Session is comprised of twenty-one Elders plus the pastor. In addition, most of the Staff regularly meet with the Session with the privilege of the floor but without the privilege of voting. Church law provides that an Elder is elected for a three-year term and may be re-elected to succeed himself. However, after six consecutive years he must be retired from the Session for at least a year. Thereafter he may be re-elected to any number of three year terms; provided he is retired for at least one year after each term. In the case of filling unexpired terms, any portion is computed as a full three years. This same pattern, set by the Constitution at the denomination, applies also to the Board of Trustees and the Deacons.

The Session is not like a board of directors which determines policies for professional personnel to administer. Its task is prayerfully to seek the will of Christ for the local Church for which it is responsible and then to implement His will. Initiative in originating procedures and faithfulness in oversight are the equal obligation of every member of the Session—whether clergy or lay. For this reason, whatever the actual vote on a given matter, the majority decision becomes the action of the entire Session.

In order to fulfill its task, the Session of First Church has organized itself into five standing committees which parallel the organization of our Staff: Parish Mission, Parish Life, Parish Worship, Parish Education, and Personnel. With the exception of the Personnel Committee, each standing committee includes five Elders plus one Staff member. The Personnel Committee includes two members of the Session, two members of the Board of Trustees, and three members-at-large.

The Session regularly meets the first Monday evening of the month. Its meetings are not open and its records are not public. The Clerk is required by the Constitution to gain the Session's approval before granting an extract from the records to anyone other than an authorized representative of the Presbytery.

Such a review of the Session's responsibilities clearly indicates that the most important business a Congregation faces is the election of its Elders. Since the governing principle in the Presbyterian Church is representative and constitutional democracy—not pure democracy or unlimited majority rule—the next most important business of a Congregation is normally the election of its pastor and other

officers. Let us, then, consider the way in which a Congregation transacts its business.

A meeting of the Congregation may be called by the Presbytery, but it is generally called by the Session. In either case public notice of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting must be given at least one week prior to the appointed time. If the meeting is a "special" one the business must be confined to those items specifically listed in the call for the meeting. However, in the annual meeting—which in First Church is normally held on the third or fourth Tuesday evening in January—the Congregation may consider and vote upon any question which the Session or Board of Trustees, or both, may place on the agenda. The moderator of the Session is also the moderator of the Congregation, and the Clerk of Session serves as secretary of all meetings of the Congregation.

The election of ruling Elders, Deacons, and Trustees follows a pattern of procedure prescribed in the Constitution. A slate of nominees must be presented by the Nominating Committee, which is comprised of nine persons: five from the congregation at large, one each from the Trustees and Deacons, and two from the Session. One of the Session's representatives must act as chairman and the pastor must serve *ex officio*. The slate may provide for a contest, but usually there is only one nominee for each vacancy. The Congregation always has the privilege of presenting additional nominations from the floor.

One of the obligations of membership in a Presbyterian Church is to attend and participate in all meetings of the Congregation. Only so can the requirements of good church citizenship be fully met.

* * *

Let us now move on to consider three Boards which serve the Church in partnership with the Session. Substantial responsibility has been delegated to each of them, and without their labors the Session could scarcely fulfill its responsibility. The first of these is the Board of Trustees, a group of eighteen men charged with direction of the civil corporation chartered by an Act of the Indiana Legislature on January 25, 1843.

* * *

A major concern of the Board of Trustees is to finance the program of First Church. By September of each year an "Asking Budget" is prepared as a result of a series of conferences with: the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer; the Personnel Committee; the Finance Committee of the Board; the Parish Mission Committee of the Session; and the Staff. After this "Asking Budget" has been approved by both the Board of Trustees and the Session, the Board is ready to conduct the Every Member Canvass. The Every Member Canvass is conducted in November, usually on the second and third

Sundays. After the Canvass has been completed an "Operating Budget" is developed for presentation to the annual meeting of the Congregation.

The Board strives to obtain from every member a pledge that represents at least half of his tithe. The pledges are reviewed by both the Board and the Session, for part of the responsibility of the officers is to "develop the grace of liberality." If a member neither contributes nor attends divine worship for an extended period, Church law requires that the Session suspend him from communicant membership.

Financing the program of the Church includes spending the money as well as obtaining the funds. The Board is therefore organized into several standing committees: Executive; Church Maintenance; Finance; Furniture and Equipment; Insurance; Legal; and Manse Maintenance.

The Board regularly meets on the second Monday evening of each month.

Another indispensable group is the Board of Deacons. This group of thirty-six men and women minister to those in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress. The Deacons expend especial effort in ministering to college students away from the city, to men and women with the armed services, and to new mothers of the parish. They also prepare the elements for Holy Communion. The work of the Deacons—most of it done anonymously or without any publicity—represents one of the truly Christ-like aspects of our parish life.

The ministry of the Deacons is underwritten by the offerings received at celebrations of Holy Communion and by gifts designed for their use. The Deacons regularly meet on the third Monday evening of each month.

The other group which assists the Session is the Board of Stewards. These are twenty-one Elders and Deacons who are not serving on the Session or the Board of Deacons and who seek to develop the fellowship of our parish. With the help of a large corps of Neighborhood Leaders, they enable members of First Church who live near one another to become better acquainted with one another and to grow in an appreciation of their Church.

In addition to these groups of officers, the Session depends upon a host of organized activities and upon every member to accomplish the mission of First Church. The organized programs are discussed later. The most important element in the Church's life does not lend itself to much discussion: When we ordain Elders we promise "to follow them insofar as we see them follow Christ."

IV.

How Big Is the Presbyterian Church?

SINCE we are part of the Holy Catholic Church we are as "big" as the communion of saints. This does not mean, of course, that everyone in Christ's Church is a Presbyterian. It means that we Presbyterians trace our origin to the beginning of His Church and that we are in a vital way identified with every manifestation of His Church. We are part of the "body" of Christ. When our own body receives an injection, let us say of penicillin, the needle touches only a tiny fraction of flesh but the effect is felt throughout the entire body. It is something like that with the body of Christ, the Church. The contributions of the Presbyterian Church to the service of Christ affect the entire life of His Church. In this sense, the Presbyterian Church is as "big" as the communion of saints; for wherever the Church of Christ finds expression Presbyterian influence is at work.

It is also possible to answer our question with statistics. Churches holding the Presbyterian order are found in fifty-two nations and count nearly fifty million members. In our own nation there are ten Presbyterian denominations, of which ours—the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America—is by far the largest. The total membership of the ten is about 4,363,000 and our membership is about 3,277,000—approximately 75% of the total. These figures represent only communicant members—persons who have made public confession of their faith in Christ and who have been received to the Lord's Table. If we were also to count our baptized children and persons who attend but never join church, then the number of Presbyterian adherents would be far larger.

One naturally wonders, Why are there nine other Presbyterian Churches in our country? Only one of the nine claims as many as a hundred thousand members. That is the Presbyterian Church in the U. S., commonly called, "The Southern Church." This denomination was formed by 47 southern presbyteries during the Civil War, so that the division in our family which it symbolizes stands as a continuing casualty of our national tragedy. Relationships among leaders of the two denominations are most cordial, and their prayerful hope is that the two Churches will be merged in the early future. The other eight Presbyterian denominations range in total membership from a scant 400 to about eighty thousand. A few of them are dissident groups which emphasize some theological point of view. The others are vestiges of history. While their size does not warrant their being considered important as the world judges such matters, the mind of Christ is distressed with any unreconciled differences

within His family. Hence, responsible churchmen seek ways to establish a spirit of cooperation among our separated brethren and ultimately to merge the several denominations into one Presbyterian Church.

There is another aspect to the question, How big is the Presbyterian Church? It has to do with the amount of influence exerted by our local parish. Is the First Presbyterian Church of Fort Wayne a self-contained congregation? When I invest my time or give my dollars to First Church am I only contributing to the local institution or am I sharing the life of the whole Church? If First Church is related to the larger Church, *how* is it related?



We have already given a partial answer to this question. First Church is *vital*ly related to—an organic part of—the Church of Jesus Christ. Anything that happens in First Church affects somewhat the whole body of Christ just as surely as a hangnail on our little finger sets our entire body on edge. We hope, of course, that our contributions to the Holy Catholic Church will be happier than a hangnail!

A more complete answer to this question leads us to the subject of the organization of our denomination, the administrative relationships between First Church and the other parts of our denomination, and the relationships between our denomination and other Christian Churches. Let us consider each of these.

The center of Presbyterian organization is the Presbytery—the judicatory (another word for church court) which is responsible for the particular Churches in a given geographical area. First Church, for example, is in Wabash River Presbytery, which is responsible for our forty-five parishes in northeast Indiana. There are seven Presbyteries in our state and 196 in our denomination. The personnel of a Presbytery includes all clergymen within its bounds plus one representative (usually called a “commissioner”) from each Session within its bounds. The Sessions appoint their own commissioners. The clergy and lay members of Presbytery enjoy completely equal rights, privileges, and responsibilities.

The Presbytery is called the “center” of denominational government because all other parts of the governmental system are related to the Presbytery like the spokes to the hub of a wheel. In one direction, the Presbytery is charged with oversight of the Sessions within its bounds and they are responsible to the Presbytery. No local Congregation, for example, can call a pastor, buy or sell property, or incur any indebtedness without the approval of Presbytery. By the same token, every minister is responsible to Presbytery. He may not

accept a call to a Church, labor outside the bounds of his Presbytery, or engage in secular enterprises without the consent of his Presbytery.

In another direction, the Presbyteries in a given geographical area—normally a state—comprise the Synod. Wabash River Presbytery, for example, and the six other Presbyteries in our state comprise the Synod of Indiana. There are 33 similar Synods. In some instances, every member of the Presbyteries is considered to be a voting member of Synod, which usually meets once a year. In other instances, like the Synod of Indiana, the voting members are delegates chosen by each Presbytery.

The purpose of Synod is more functional than administrative. That is, it offers the Congregations and Presbyteries within its bounds the means with which to conduct the projects and promote the institutions for which they share common concern and responsibility. In Indiana, for example, the Synod relates our Churches to Hanover College; to our campus ministries at Purdue, Indiana University, DePauw, Ball State, and Indiana State College; to two homes for the aged, one in North Manchester and one in Lexington; to our summer camps at Brownstown, Winona Lake, and Rochester; and to new Churches, which are always being formed. Our Congregation contributes annually to these projects an amount equal to fifteen percent of our contribution to General Assembly benevolences. How big is First Church? Big enough that when you present your tithe or offering on Sunday morning you are helping to support a Christian college, to witness to faculty and college students in state universities, to minister to aged persons, to provide summer conferences for thousands of young people, and to establish new Churches in Indiana.

In still another direction, commissioners from each of the 196 Presbyteries comprise the General Assembly. This is commonly called our "highest" judicatory, but its membership and much of its agenda are determined by the Presbyteries and many of its decisions are ineffective until they receive the concurrence of at least a majority of the Presbyteries. The General Assembly meets annually in May in one of our larger cities.

The purpose of General Assembly is both functional and administrative. On the one hand, it enables our Congregations to conduct a world-wide missionary enterprise; to perform a many-sided ministry in all parts of our nation and to all classes of society; to engage in many educational efforts, such as the preparation of materials for our Sunday Schools, the management of a first-rate publishing house called the Westminster Press, the continuing study of critical social issues, the support of nearly fifty liberal arts colleges, and the direction of a campus ministry at almost 150 universities; to provide for the training of future clergy in nine seminaries; and to work through

a number of national and world-wide inter-denominational organizations. How big is First Church? Big enough that when you present your tithe or offering on Sunday morning you are participating in all of these Christian works throughout our nation and around the world.

On the other hand, the General Assembly is administrative in a way that the Synods are not. While a given General Assembly is in existence only during the ten days it is in session, its administrative responsibilities continue without interruption. Every General Assembly honors one of its members by electing him Moderator, an office which he holds until his successor is chosen by the next General Assembly. The chief executive officer of the General Assembly, however, is the Stated Clerk. He is elected for a five-year term of service and may be re-elected to succeed himself. Our present Stated Clerk is Eugene Carson Blake, who has held the office since 1951. The continuing committee which represents the General Assembly between its meetings is the General Council, a group of twenty-one men and women representative of the various sections of the country and concerns of the Church plus nine representatives of the Boards and Agencies of the General Assembly plus certain *ex officio* members. The Moderator of the General Assembly is also Moderator of the General Council. Its executive is the Secretary of the General Council, presently Theophilus M. Taylor.

The General Assembly administers its vast program of services through a number of Boards and Agencies: the Board of Christian Education, the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations, the Board of National Missions, the Board of Pensions, the Council on Theological Education, the Commission of Evangelism, the Commission on Radio and Television, and the Commission on Race Relations. Each of these is responsible for implementing a portion of the program adopted by the General Assembly. Each is guided in its conduct by a "Board" and each performs its work through a "Staff." The membership of the Boards is prescribed by Church law in a way to assure representation of the whole denomination and to accomplish periodic rotation. The Staffs are comprised of men and women who are competent "professionals" in their respective fields.

Every member of First Church is a participant in the total far-flung Presbyterian enterprise. Many members become directly and personally involved by virtue of election or appointment to a judicatory, Board, or agency. At the same time, we are all recipients of the total enterprise.

Such is the "size" of the Presbyterian Church.

V.

What Is Different About First Church?

WE ALL recognize a snowflake when we see one. Yet it is a truism that no two snowflakes are exactly alike.

So it is with parish churches. We also know a church when we see one, yet no two of them are identical. They differ as regards location: some are downtown, some in a neighborhood or suburbia, some are in a tiny village or open country. They differ as regards membership: some include members from all walks of life and all parts of the community, and some have a tightly knit membership from one or two neighborhoods and from one or two social or economic classes. They differ as regards such matters as theology, church government, and worship practices. Some are "friendly" and others "cold." Some are "active" and others "dead." Some are "large" and some "small." We can sum it up like this: Every church has a personality of its own.

How can we describe the distinctive personality of First Church? Some features are immediately obvious: We are a downtown city church. Our membership is drawn from all neighborhoods and suburbs of the city and from all the economic levels and all the social classes. We are a friendly, active, and large church.

To understand the 'spirit' of First Church, however, we must dig a little deeper. We must go back at least as far as 1950—a year of discovery and decision for First Church, a year that culminated a long period of soul-searching on the part of the congregation. The soul-searching had been prompted by the retirement of the distinguished pastor, Dr. George W. Allison, and by the prodding questions he asked as his ministry approached its close. Questions like these: Is First Church doing the most it can for the Kingdom of God? Is it using its venerable heritage as the oldest church in the city—or is it resting on the accomplishments of former generations? Is it making the most effective use of its choice location near the heart of the city? Is it adapting to the new opportunities and limitations imposed by a modern city? Is it seeking to claim the city for Christ?

The Congregation became so intrigued with questions like these that it appointed a committee of twelve members to study the mission of First Church. Granted that the Church is God's servant community, appointed by Him to engage in His work of reconciling the world to Himself, what is His specific assignment to First Church? This committee appointed four sub-committees of twelve members each to ask this question as regards four different aspects of the

Church's life. What is the mission of First Church in public worship? In Christian education? In service to the community? In the development of Christian fellowship? These four sub-committees worked for nearly a year and their reports, as coordinated by the original committee and as they have been periodically revised, serve as a kind of charter for the present ministry of First Church.

As a result of this massive effort the Congregation and Session understand the responsibility of First Church in terms of three "parishes." One is *the parish of our membership*—we are responsible for nurturing our members in the Christian faith, equipping them for their own ministries as servants of Christ in this world. Another is *the parish of our neighborhood*—we are responsible for showing Christ-like concern for the people who live in the shadow of our building, winning into our Church's reconciling fellowship as many as are led to accept our Lord's invitation. The third is *the parish of our community*—we are responsible for proclaiming God's Word as He speaks to our present human situation, and for becoming involved with whatever enterprises seek to reconcile our city, our nation, and our world to God.



The Session sought to spell out this interpretation of the mission of First Church in more specific terms. Accordingly, in 1950 it adopted the following statement:

"... What is the main business of the Church? A wise man answered this question well when he said that the task of the Church is *to create the creators of a new society*. The business of the Church is to build persons—the kind of persons who in turn will build the Kingdom of God. This means bringing ordinary people under the influence of the personality of Jesus in such a manner that they become extraordinary people—God's people. To accomplish this purpose the Church seeks to impart knowledge and appreciation of the historical facts upon which our faith is founded and to develop a fellowship which will express this new knowledge and appreciation in Christ-like behavior.

"The task of the Church is as unchanging as God Himself. It is the same yesterday, today, and forever. But the techniques by which this task is achieved are not always the same. One technique—Christian worship—is almost 2,000 years old. Another technique—the Sunday School—is not quite 200 years old. A few years ago 85% of new Church members were the fruitage of mass evangelism or revivals. Today 85% of our new members come from our Church school. Think of the plight of the Church today if our fathers and grandfathers had refused to use the Sunday School to accomplish the Church's purpose in their generations.

"The mission of the modern Church, then, is precisely the same as the mission of the ancient Church: to transform people by winning them to the Christian fellowship. The "modern" element involves only the techniques of accomplishing this ancient goal. Our twentieth-century job is to discover and develop a strategy that will win to Christ the young people, the men and the women who live in Fort Wayne TODAY.

"This is a large order—quite the largest that can be demanded of our generation. Certain time-honored institutions which have been indispensable allies of the Church are in peril. For example, the family—always the unit of Christian worship and nurture—is torn asunder by the tempo of modern life. And the Sabbath—always the Church's own day—is the victim of modern industrialism and of commercialized recreation. How can the Church perform its mission without such ancient allies as strong family life and the Sabbath? This is the kind of question the modern Church strategist must answer.

"Plainly, the Church that persists in confining its activities to one day a week—to Sunday—is already dead. It may not yet be a corpse but its life is quickly ebbing. The Church that plans its approach to people in the leisurely spirit of the 1890's is just as dead. The Church that tries to live in a modern city with the equipment and the outlook of a neighborhood Church in a small town is committing suicide. The Church that will survive and that will fulfill its modern mission is the Church which utilizes modern methods to reach the ancient goal.

"This means that the Church must function seven days a week. If the enemies of Christ snatch the Lord's Day from us let us lay claim on all seven days for Him. Are there not twelve hours in the day? Are there not seven days in the week?

"This means that the Church must center its activities in the Church. Only in an adequately equipped and sufficiently large building can the program of a modern city Church find proper expression.

"This means that the Church must utilize all tested educational procedures. Psychology has brought many revelations and has practically revolutionized teaching processes, particularly for the very young. The modern Church must use these insights for Christ.

"This means that the Church must develop a community consciousness and a world-awareness. A narrow parish outlook is selfish and—like all things selfish—is doomed.

"This means that the Church must be adequately manned. Professional leaders trained in the art of worship, in the skills of teach-

ing and in the science of human relations must be obtained to develop such a full-orbed strategy.

“Let us interpret the mission of the modern Church in specific terms. Remembering all the foregoing considerations, today’s Church will develop approaches to all age groups:

Pre-school children will be reached through a nursery and kindergarten—operated six days a week and directed by trained specialists.

Grade school children will be reached by choirs and clubs, by Cub Packs and Scout Troops, by summer day camps and playground activities.

Junior high students will be reached by week-night programs of movies, discussions and social hours, by hobby classes and by Sunday fellowship groups.

Senior high students will be reached by a similar schedule with more emphasis on discussion and service projects and with occasional retreats. Unmarried adults will be reached by organized groups meeting on week-nights, with full programs of varied activities—cultural, educational, social, recreational, sports and athletics, hobbies and handicrafts.

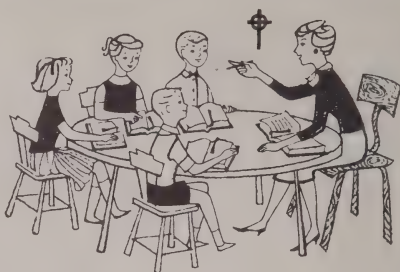
Young married people will be reached by means of social meetings with purposeful activities and with satisfying opportunities to meet new friends.

Larger segments of the congregation will be reached by periodic dinners and fellowship gatherings, series of forum discussions, lectures, concerts and dramatic productions.

“All of this in addition to helpful services of divine worship, the conventional Church school, and ready accessibility to trained social workers and personal counselors for those in trouble or seeking advice.

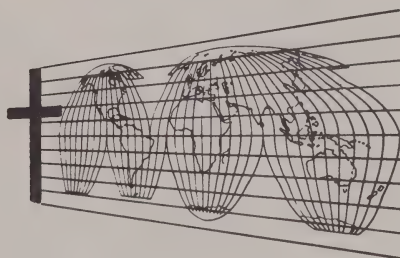
“With a well-rounded program such as this our Church will develop a strategy which will enable it to fulfill its modern mission: *to create the creators of a new society*. With this kind of program we shall be able to introduce all kinds of people to Jesus of Nazareth and to win them as His disciples in building the Kingdom of God . . .”

Our years since 1950 have been mainly spent in implementing the mission of First Church according to this understanding. The im-



plementation has taken three main lines of direction: (1) We have sought to develop a seven-day-a-week program of parish activities which seek to minister to the real-life needs of our parishioners, our neighbors, and our community. (2) We have sought to build a church edifice sufficiently functional to house these activities and sufficiently beautiful to honor our Lord and His Father. (3) We have sought to enlist the services of a professional staff which brings together a group of persons sufficiently skilled to guide our people in their Christian development.

To return to our original question, the most distinctive feature of First Church is probably our sense of mission. We are convinced that God has called us together in this congregation to serve Him. We know that we serve God and worship Him only as we serve His children. In First Church we believe we have the most effective instrument available to us for this worship and service.





VI.

What Is the Program of First Church?

DURING a typical week the total attendance at the activities sponsored by First Church is between four and six thousand. Sunday events account for no more than one-third of this number. In other words, two of every three persons entering our building are sharing activities which occur Monday through Saturday. This is a measure of the distance we have come in relating the Church to our lives seven days a week.

It is easy to suppose that such an emphasis upon week-day activities represents a concern with "busy work"—substitutions for vigorous worship, obedient service, and hard thinking. Nothing could be further from the truth. Most of the activities are precisely activities in worship, service, or thinking—sometimes all three. Before any part of our program can be initiated or maintained it must give evidence to the Session of contributing to the nurture of our people in the Christ life. More exactly, since Christians are in the world for the sake of other people, every activity sponsored by First Church must be judged to equip its participants in some way for more effective service.

Even a hurried glance at the list of parish events indicates that there are too many for any one person to participate in all of them. Indeed, if someone should try to attend every program in our building he would soon become either exhausted or neurotic—or both. The Session hopes, therefore, that every parishioner will view the program offerings somewhat as he would a counter of food in a cafeteria. That is, each person should become acquainted with the programs and activities which are made available and then select two or three for his own participation. He will not make his choices, however, simply upon the basis of what he "likes." He will make his selections on the basis of what promises to help him most in his life of Christian service. That is, he will share in those activities which are most likely to equip him for more effective discipleship. For some this will mean choosing programs designed to help them to become better prepared to serve, programs like Adult Seminars, Prayer Cells, or Contract Groups. For others this will mean choosing activities which offer them a chance to serve in ways in which they are already prepared, activities like teaching in Sunday School, working as Choir Mothers, or singing in the Chancel Choir. For still others this may mean choosing one of each type of program offering.

There is one activity in which every parishioner should faithfully engage. That is the public worship of God. Regular participation in

divine worship is the most basic form of Christian service. Indeed, we normally speak of a "service of worship"—seldom realizing with what accuracy we use the word "service." More often than not we make it sound as though "service" means an "order" or even a "program" of music, prayers, and preaching. Actually, the word "service" is a translation of the Greek word, "leiturgia"—from which we also derive our word "liturgy." St. Paul uses "leiturgia" in his familiar twelfth chapter of Romans: "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service." From this sample it is plain that "service" and "liturgy" or "worship" are close to being synonymous. We do not "worship" God one hour a week and "serve" God the rest of the time. Our "worship" is part of our "service"—an indispensable part.

Public worship is the heart of God's judging and transforming encounter with man. The encounter occurs through the activity of the Holy Spirit as the congregation reads the Scriptures; hears the Gospel preached; participates in Baptism and the Lord's Supper; presents to God the Christian's life through the offering; praises and adores God by means of music and other arts; presents to God the needs and desires of the world in intercessions and petitions; and confesses its sins with repentant acceptance of God's judgment on the world and the Christian community in the world. If a Christian absents himself for long from this arduous exercise, there is real question that he can be growing in the Christ life. When he enters into this exercise he is truly serving God and man.

The Session of First Church provides for the public worship of God at three hours every Sunday: 8:00 A.M. in McMillen Chapel; 9:15 A.M. and 11:00 A.M. in the Sanctuary. The schedule for celebrating the Lord's Supper follows the pattern of the Church calendar: the first Sunday in Advent; Epiphany or the Sunday nearest Epiphany; Ash Wednesday evening; Holy Thursday evening; the Sunday after Easter; Ascension Sunday or Pentecost; and mid-Trinity. In addition, the Lord's Supper is celebrated the first Sunday of every month in the eight o'clock Chapel service. Baptism is usually celebrated the second Sunday following a general celebration of the Lord's Supper. In addition, two services of Baptism are conducted annually on Sunday afternoons—normally in the autumn and in the spring.

All other activities are subservient to and find their focus in public worship. Their specific purposes vary considerably, but they all share the common purpose of encouraging the nurture of our parishioners in the Christ-life. For your convenience, brief sketches are listed here of the organized opportunities to grow in service which are offered by First Church. When you have selected the two or three activities

which seem to hold the most promise for you, you will find the exact time and place of meeting in the weekly worship folders. If you care to discuss any of these programs, please contact a member of the Staff or the Session.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULTS

Prayer Cells—Small groups which meet weekly for study, prayer, and discussion.

Women's Association—For all women of the parish. Meets the second Friday of each month. Membership divided into "Circles" which meet the fourth Friday of each month.

Men's Forum—For all men of the parish and their friends. Luncheon served promptly at noon on Wednesday—then a discussion which adjourns at one o'clock.

Sunday School—Adults' classes at 9:15 and 11:00 o'clock. About two hundred adults serve as teachers in other classes. Each volunteer receives training and an apprenticeship.

Ambassadors—About a hundred men and women who visit persons who have indicated an interest in affiliating with First Church.

Alcoholics Anonymous—A chapter of this national organization meets in First Church every Tuesday evening.

Couples Clubs—Three groups—*Ice-Breakers*, *Sunday Nighters*, and *Navigators*—meet monthly for an evening of fun and a worthwhile program. They also sponsor family camps each summer.

Young Adults—Two groups are formed of unmarried adults: *T.N.T.'s* (Twenties 'n Thirties) meet every Sunday for supper, worship, and program. *Sunday Noon Round Table* meets on alternate Sundays for luncheon and discussion.

Chancel Choir—This is a chorus comprised completely of volunteers who lead in worship at 11:00 o'clock and present special concerts. Rehearsals are Thursday, 7:30 P.M.

Adult Education—Stimulating courses are offered each season. *Adult Seminars* are lecture series attended by large groups. *Contract Groups* are limited to 15 persons who "contract" to study

a specific topic for six to eight weeks. Other educational opportunities are offered adults from time to time.

White Cross Guild—Women who serve as aides in local hospitals.

For Men Only—Help is often needed for Scout groups, Ushers' corps, and youth groups.

For Women Only—Women are often needed as "Choir Mothers," office assistants, and sponsors of youth activities.

For Couples—Chaperons are often needed for Community Night and parish youth events.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEEN-AGERS

Sunday School—Classes for both junior and senior highs at 9:15 and 11:00 during the school year and at 9:15 during the summer. Register any Sunday at the Church Office.



Communicants Class—Course taught by members of the Staff and designed to prepare for Church membership young people who have reached at least the seventh grade. Meets on Sunday morning from January until Palm Sunday.

Junior High Westminster Fellowship—Meets on Wednesday at 4:30 for instruction, fun, and supper.

Senior High Westminster Fellowship—Meets on Sunday at 5:30 p.m. for worship, discussion, and leadership training. Supper is served at seven and recreation follows.

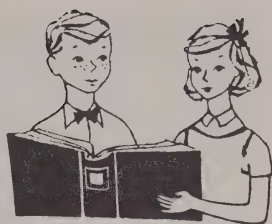
Boy Scouts—Two Scout units are sponsored by First Church: Boy Scout Troop 13 and Explorer Scout Post 2013.

Youth Choirs—One of our six youth choral groups is the Westminster Choir. Rehearses Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. and leads the congregation in divine worship at 9:15 every Sunday.

Community Night—On Friday evenings our Youth Lounge is open to all young people of the community. Junior highs are welcome from 7:00 until 8:45, and senior highs from 9:00 until 11:00 o'clock. Admission fee is ten cents. Parishioners serve as chaperons.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN

Before They Go To School—Three weekday schools are offered our children before they enter the first grade: *Nursery*—two mornings per week for three-year-olds; *Pre-Kindergarten*—three mornings per week for 3½-year-olds; and *Pre-School Kindergarten*—five mornings per week for four and five-year-olds. A nominal tuition is charged. Application forms may be secured from the Church Office.



Sunday School—Classes for children of all ages are conducted at 9:15 and 11:00 o'clock (9:15 only in July and August). Register your child any Sunday morning at the Church Office.

Adventure Hour—Just as the name implies, Adventure Hour combines fun, choir rehearsal, and education one afternoon each week. Children in grades 1, 2, and 3 meet Friday from 4:00 until 5:00. Children in grades 4, 5, and 6 meet Thursday from 4:00 until 5:30 o'clock.



Youth Choirs—The four choirs comprised of grade school children rehearse during Adventure Hour. The Cherub Choir is part of our Pre-School Weekday Kindergarten. The Chapel Choir is comprised of seventh and eighth graders, rehearses on Wednesday evenings at seven o'clock, and occasionally leads the congregation in worship during the eight o'clock service.

Pioneers—A club for grade school children who live near the Church. It meets every Monday at four o'clock for a variety of activities.

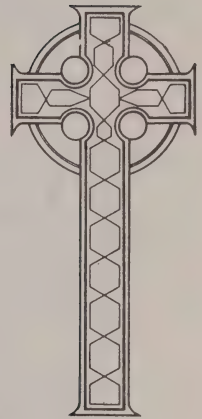
Daily Vacation Bible School—Every June First Church cooperates with neighboring churches to conduct a two-week program of Christian education during the morning hours.

Mother's Hours Out—This could be considered an opportunity for mothers! Twice each week child care is provided to offer mothers an extended period of free time at a minimal babysitting cost.

Mother's Morning Out is every Thursday from 9:00 until 11:30 o'clock. *Mother's Afternoon Out* is every Wednesday from 1:00 until 4:00. Fee is fifty cents per child; seventy-five cents for two or more children in the same family.



Who and What is the Staff?

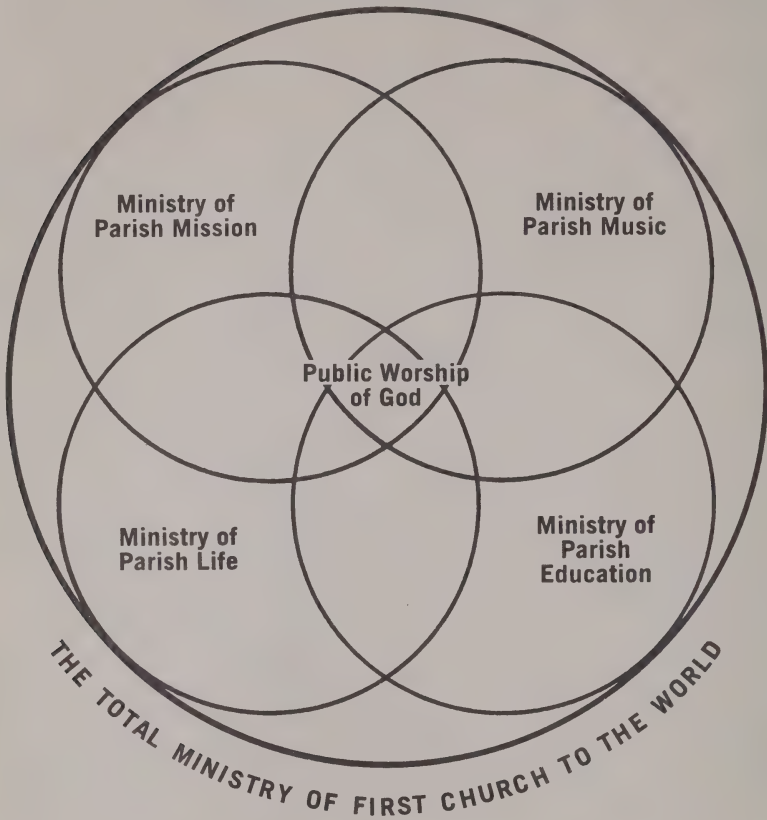


THE STAFF of First Church is a group of persons who *together* fill the same place in the life of this parish that the pastor fills in the life of a more conventional parish.

Once our Session and Congregation are committed to a seven-day-a-week ministry to our members and through our members to the neighborhood and community, a Staff becomes absolutely necessary. No one person possesses either the energy or the skills required for the professional leadership of such a full-orbed ministry. Only a group of persons with special training and competence in a variety of areas can offer the professional guidance essential for such a ministry. But the group must function as one person, else the program will lack integrity of purpose and expression.

Accordingly, the philosophy undergirding our Staff is expressed by Paul: "As in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another." (Romans 12) He was speaking, of course, about the Church, but what he said applies equally well to our Staff. Each Staff member is responsible for such areas of First Church's life as are compatible with his personal competence, training, and concern. At the same time, however, he neither limits himself to those areas for which he is responsible nor isolates himself from the activities for which other Staff members are responsible. While a Staff member is accountable for certain parts of the parish program, he is encouraged to assist other Staff members and to enlist their help. Thus our Staff works together as "one body."

INTRA-STAFF RELATIONS



The circular chart indicates how the responsibilities are shared among four functional groups:

I. The Ministry of Parish Mission

These Staff members are responsible for guiding the Session and Congregation in determining the specific mission of First Church and for directing all of the worship and work of First Church toward the accomplishment of that mission. Serving together in this assignment are: the minister of parish mission, the assistant to the pastor, the spiritual life counselor, the bookkeeper, the secretaries, the building superintendent, and the intern.

II. The Ministry of Parish Education

These Staff members are responsible for providing educational opportunities which will enable parishioners of all ages to grow in an understanding of the Christian faith and in an intelligent commitment to Jesus Christ. Serving together in this area are: the minister of parish education, the director of children's activities, and the director of youth activities.

III. The Ministry of Parish Music

These Staff members are responsible for bringing all expressions of sacred music into the service of Christ and His Church by such means as choral and instrumental groups to lead in worship, music education, and special concerts. Serving together in this ministry are: the minister of music, the organist, and the director of music education.

IV. The Ministry of Parish Life

These Staff members are responsible for the evangelistic efforts of First Church, for the involvement of new members in the life of the parish, and for the nurture of our parishioners in the Christ life through such means as personal counseling, pastoral visits, and group activities. Serving together in this capacity are: the minister of parish life, the minister of visitation, and the minister of counseling.

The chart also indicates how these persons work together and how their responsibilities are inter-related. The large outer circle represents the total exertion of First Church for Christ and His Kingdom. Each of the smaller circles represents one of the four kinds of ministry which comprise this total exertion. The placement of these circles is such as to make vivid the fact that every form of ministry functions virtually alone in certain areas, overlaps substantially with other forms of ministry in certain areas, and that the nearer we approach the center of the Church's life—the public worship of God—the more completely all forms of ministry are involved. At the other extreme, the area not enclosed by any of the smaller circles symbolizes the fact that much of First Church's impact is not channeled through any of the four Staff groups.

Charts and statements may help us to understand how responsibilities are shared and how the Staff members are related as they carry their responsibilities. Something more must be said, however, if we are to make the Staff "come alive" in our minds as a vital team of persons functioning as one pastor. What do these persons *do* to develop a sense of oneness and of common responsibility?

The first and most constant thing they do is to pray together. Every morning at 8:15 the Staff members assemble in McMillen Chapel to offer themselves anew to God, to pray for the world and the whole state of Christ's Church, and to intercede particularly for the members of four or five of our parish families. This prayer service, by the way, is open to the public and is regularly shared by several other persons in addition to the Staff.

Following the prayers, the Staff meets in another part of the building to review the relationship to the Church of the persons who

have been named in their prayers. If a pastoral call seems to be indicated, a clergyman volunteers to make the visit. If someone appears to be a likely helper in some part of the Church's life, a Staff member volunteers to confront the person with the opportunity to serve. As a result of this daily prayer and review we are certain that every member of First Church is "known" by at least one member of the Staff. This is significant. It means that the pastor of First Church—the Staff—knows every member of his parish by name.

The sense of oneness among the Staff is also developed by weekly Staff meetings and by periodic Staff retreats. The former are chiefly planning sessions which enable the Staff members to coordinate their activities, to offer helpful criticisms, and to enlist the help of one another in a variety of ways. The retreats are longer meetings—usually two or three days—at some quiet place away from the Church which are designed to renew the Staff spiritually and to enable them to take a long and large view of First Church and its mission.

The Staff does not really "come alive" for a parishioner, however, until he knows as a friend one or more members of the Staff. This review of the way responsibilities are divided and shared is intended to help you take the initiative in developing such friendships. It is not intended, in other words, as a set of "job descriptions." We have a set of such definitions—twenty pages worth!—but they are generally of use only to the Session and Staff. This review, on the other hand, is simply to help you know enough about the way our Staff functions to understand that it is not important to know the *specific* responsibilities of a particular Staff member. Every member of the Staff is vitally concerned with the entire life of the parish. Every member works in all four areas—and in those activities which cannot be squeezed into one of the formal areas. When you have reason to share any problem or concern with your pastor, therefore, do not speculate as to which member of the Staff you should contact. Telephone or visit with the Staff member you know best or whom you would like to know better. You will find him anxious to help regardless of the title he carries. And if he thinks another Staff member can be more helpful, he will be quick to say so.

The Staff will also "come alive" for you when you remember that the entire Staff functions through the ministry of each Staff member. When any member of the Staff visits in your home, that is really a visit from the entire Staff. The reason is quite simple: A Staff member is able to do any of these deeds only because other Staff members are doing other deeds.

This, then, is your pastor! Not one person, but a group of persons who invest their lives in a common and completely shared ministry.

VIII.

What Is the Story of Our Building?



THE MISSION of First Church accounts for its present group of buildings just as surely as it accounts for our parish program and professional Staff. A seven-day-a-week ministry to the whole person and the entire community requires certain basic equipment. There must be a *place* for such a ministry to happen. Specifically, there must be a sanctuary that is conducive to transforming worship experiences, facilities that are adequate for the intended group activities, and rooms that are appropriate for offices and personal conferences.

When the Congregation and Session first became convinced of the nature of our Church's mission, they explored the possibilities of remodeling their existing church plant to accommodate the anticipated full-orbed ministry. Conferences with experienced architects revealed that such a program would be totally impractical. It would cost an unreasonable sum and the resulting structure would still be inadequate. Similar consultations also revealed that the space available made it impractical to build a new structure on that side. Consequently, the Congregation and Session asked Presbytery for permission to move to another downtown location and to build a new edifice. The Presbytery not only granted this request, but cooperated with the help of expert social scientists in determining a suitable new location. The site of our present structure is the unanimous first choice of the professional advisors.

The Congregation and Session have been guided by several principles in their building efforts:

1. The buildings must be as functional as they are beautiful. The House of the Lord should manifest the highest beauty the

human mind can imagine and human skill can fashion. We worship God in the beauty of holiness. But a structure designed to enable First Church to fulfill its mission must be more than a lovely shrine. It must also be functional. Its floor plan, its facilities, its possibilities for future development must all be practical. In a word, First Church must be an instrument to be used in God's service; not a monument to human craftsmanship.

2. The buildings must symbolize God's place in our lives. Other buildings may properly be built as cheaply as possible. A shed or a warehouse, even a summer cottage or temporary classroom, may be put together with the cheapest kind of materials. But not so when it comes to building a church. A church building represents what the congregation who worships there *really* think of God. If people live in the best homes they can afford it is only reasonable that they build the best church they can afford. Otherwise no one—least of all, their children—will believe them when they say that God is the *center* and Jesus is the *Lord* of their lives. Actions speak louder than words. In the case of First Church this principle is carried even further. Since our building is located in the center of our city, it bears witness to the place of Christ in the life of our community as well as in the life of our congregation.
3. The buildings must be built on a pay-as-you-go basis. This is only good stewardship. If the building must witness to our faith by being the best we can afford, it must also witness to our integrity by being no better than our people are willing to buy. It is both unkind and dishonest for one generation to build a structure and expect another generation to pay for it. Consequently, our buildings have been constructed only as pledges sufficient to underwrite the basic cost have been received: the Christian education facility in 1954, the Sanctuary and offices in 1956, the McMillen Chapel in 1958, and the Fellowship Hall in 1963. Even with this conservative procedure, additional gifts are needed to compensate for unfulfilled pledges, to cover the cost of items not in the original cost, and to pay for needed additions to capital equipment.

The buildings as they stand are a tribute to the generous efforts of many persons. The original incentive for a Building Fund came by way of Mr. and Mrs. Dale W. McMillen, Sr., who invited a small group of donors to unite with them in offering \$500,000 if the rest of the Congregation would raise another \$500,000. The others in this group of original donors were: Dr. and Mrs. Charles W. Crowe, Dr. and Mrs. John E. Culp, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred W. Kettler, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Milton B. Larimer, Mrs. Alida B. McKay, Mr. and Mrs. Neil

A. McKay, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. William T. McKay, Mr. and Mrs. Dale W. McMillen, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Harold W. McMillen, Dr. and Mrs. S. R. Mercer, Mr. and Mrs. Harry C. Offutt, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Harry C. Offutt, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Frederick E. Perfect, and Mr. and Mrs. Frederick B. Shoaff.

In the years since, our Congregation has engaged in five money raising efforts for the Building Fund and in each of them the same basic pattern has obtained: about half of the total has been given by a small group of original or "challenge" donors and the other half has been contributed by the rest of the parishioners. The buildings, then, represent the gifts of great numbers of our congregation.

The names of all the persons who have contributed to our Building Fund are listed on permanent plaques in the Narthex. These plaques also note the many memorials which have been contributed in honor of particular persons. Additional names are inscribed on the plaques annually, for each year finds new contributors to the Building Fund and new memorials being established. It is a growing custom, for example, to contribute a memorial gift to the Church in lieu of sending flowers at the time of death.

The Session and the Board of Trustees very early adopted policies to implement the Congregation's desire that the buildings be an instrument in the service of the Church's mission. The preamble to a major policy statement adopted in 1957 indicates the spirit of our officers:

"Whereas, the First Presbyterian Church of Fort Wayne, Indiana has committed itself to fulfill its mission to be an effective city church; and

"Whereas, the fulfillment of this mission implies an inclusive fellowship which ministers to the entire city; and . . .

"Whereas, this sense of mission requires us to consider our buildings as so many instruments to be used in the widest possible variety of ways and by the largest possible number of people . . ."

The policy statement itself provides: that parish programs be given priority over every other request for use; that programs of the Associated Churches be given second priority; and that other groups and organizations may be granted use of the building, provided they tend to contribute to the development of responsible citizenship and to the total cultural life of our city.

Many rooms are available without charge to outside groups. Others have a fixed rental and still others have an hourly rental rate. It is important to note that *individuals* may not be granted use of the building for private purposes or parties except that appropriate fa-

cilities may be rented for wedding receptions. All requests for facilities should be made to the assistant-to-the-pastor, who is responsible for scheduling the use of the buildings.

One facility available to parishioners deserves special mention: the Ruth Brown Retreat House on the William T. McKay farm immediately north of the city. This Retreat House will accommodate up to sixty retreatants in a natural atmosphere for worshipful meditation and prayerful planning. It is especially helpful in offering young people of the Church experiences in prayer and worship. The same basic policy governs the use of the Retreat House that governs other Church facilities. Requests for its use should be made to the assistant-to-the-pastor.

Separate mention should also be made of the Senseny Memorial Columbarium. This is a room located adjacent to the Memory Chapel and especially designed for the permanent safe-keeping of the cremated remains of deceased persons. The use of the Columbarium is ordinarily limited to communicant members of First Church and their immediate families. While there is no charge for placing urns in the Columbarium, it is customary to make a gift to the Columbarium Fund, an account restricted to the maintenance and future expansion of the Columbarium.

Let us now turn to a happier note.

The buildings should be a kind of second home to our parishioners. Every member should feel comfortable and "at home" in the Church. In order to help develop this feeling, a conducted tour of the buildings is offered every Sunday morning after the eleven o'clock service and during each series of New Member Hours. If you have never taken this tour, please do! You will most certainly find the experience interesting and worthwhile. And after the tour you will discover that the buildings are "yours" in a new way.



What Are the Financial Facts of Life?



In light of this standard, there are no “big” givers or “small” givers to the Church. There are only “good” givers and “poor” or “bad” givers. The amount in dollars which a person contributes is not significant. What matters is *the proportion of his income* which he gives for Kingdom purposes. A man may give \$100 a week to the Church, but if his income is more than a \$100,000 per year his giving is not as “good” as the person’s whose gift is \$7.50 a week and who earns \$7,500 a year. This judgment, according to the Scriptures, is not man’s but God’s.

The ongoing worship and work of First Church are underwritten by the Current Expense Budget. This Budget is prepared in the early autumn by several committees meeting over many weeks. When it is approved by the Session and Board of Trustees, the Budget is put before the Congregation and they are invited to pledge to its support. The pledges are received in the Every Member Canvass about the second or third Sunday in November and are effective for the next calendar year. Weekly offering envelopes are mailed to all members

before the first of the year. At regular quarterly intervals throughout the year statements are mailed to all members, indicating the amount of the pledge, the amount paid, and the amount owing, if any. New members who join during the year are asked to pledge for the remaining part of that calendar year. This not only enables them to begin immediately to carry their responsibility in First Church, but it also compensates for the pledged income which is annually lost when members move from Fort Wayne.

The Current Expense Budget totals approximately a little less than \$350,000 per year. Income from the Youth Budget, various fees and tuitions, and special offerings account for about \$25,000. This means that about \$325,000—or an average of about \$125.00 from each communicant member—must be received from pledges.

Five groups of items comprise our Current Expense Budget. The detailed expenditures within each category are reported and explained at the Annual Meeting. For our present purpose it is enough to list the five with a brief explanatory word:

I. For The Ministry of Our Parish to The World

Everything that happens in, through, and because of First Church *is* the ministry of our parish to the world. The world includes Fort Wayne and the places where our members live and work and play—and our members are the Church in action. However, the direct influence of our people cannot extend to all places of human need throughout the earth. First Church, therefore, ministers beyond the geographical limits of our parish through the Boards and Agencies of the United Presbyterian Church. An amount equal to 35% of our current local expenses is designated as benevolences for this larger ministry.

II. For Our Ministry of Parish Mission

This group of items includes: compensation for ten Staff persons; all efforts at effective communication—such as a subscription to PRESBYTERIAN LIFE for every family, telephone service, and printed materials; and the maintenance of our Church buildings and manses. (It should be noted that the Forest Park Manse is endowed by a special gift from Mr. and Mrs. Dale W. McMillen, Sr., so that no funds from the Current Expense Budget are expended on that property.) The total spent on these items is slightly less than half of the total current local expenses.



III. For Our Ministry of Parish Education

The items in this group include: compensation for four full-time and five part-time Staff persons; the expenses of all our schools—Weekday Pre-School Nursery and Kindergarten, Sunday School, Junior and Senior High Westminster Fellowship, Adult Seminars, and occasional lectureships; and the benevolence contributions of our young people through their Youth Budget. The total of these items is about fifteen per cent of all current expenses. About $2/5$ of the amount is derived from tuitions and fees; about $3/5$ is derived from pledges to the Current Expense Budget.

IV. For Our Ministry of Parish Life

Items in this group include: compensation for five Staff persons; evangelism materials—such as the Communicants' Class curriculum and copies of the BOOK OF COMMON WORSHIP for new members; and programs to enhance the Christian nurture of our people. They total about 10% of the Current Expense Budget.

V. For Our Ministry of Parish Music

These items include: compensation for three Staff persons; printed music, robes, and other expenses for the Choirs; and maintenance of our two pipe organs, electronic organ, handbells, tower chimes, and carillon. They also total about 10% of the Current Expense Budget.

The Current Expense Budget—as important and as inclusive as it is—does *not* represent all of the program of First Church. Five important activities involve budgets of their own which are not reflected in the basic Current Budget.

One is the *First Presbyterian Music Series*. This program brings annually to our Aeolian-Skinner console four or five of the world's most prominent organists. In addition, it sponsors the National Organ Competition—which has brought fame to First Church throughout the continent. The budget for the Music Series is approximately \$3,000 and is subscribed by members and non-members of First Church who believe in the worth of sacred music.

A second separate budget is for our *Building Fund*. This Fund is to underwrite the construction of our Church buildings. Pledges sufficient for the cost of each unit were received before that unit was built. However, deaths and defaults have left this Fund almost \$50,000 short of the necessary amount. All members are urged to consider making a contribution to this project.

A third budget concerns the *Development of Our Former Site*. This effort is an attempt by our present Congregation to prove a

faithful steward of the valuable real estate which is ours by virtue of the past faithfulness of our ancestors in First Church. At the present time and for several years to come *it brings no income to First Church* beyond the nominal rental for our land. Even that income, along with rentals from the parking lots adjacent to the Church, is assigned to the banks to repay the money borrowed to complete our Church buildings in 1956.

Fourth, is the *Foundation of First Presbyterian Church*. This Foundation is chartered by the State of Indiana for the purpose of receiving gifts and legacies for designated purposes related to the life and work of First Church. The Directors use undesignated gifts to the Foundation to supplement the various expressions of our Church's ministry.

And fifth, is the *Deacon's Fund*. All celebrations of Holy Communion include an opportunity for communicants to contribute to this fund, which enables the Deacons to perform their deeds of love and mercy. Their work will be as limited or as expansive as these gifts permit.

In addition to these five activities and the Current Expense Budget, finances are involved in the life of many parish organizations. The Women's Association, for example, encourages its members to express the traditional concern of women for the second-mile work of the Kingdom. Virtually all of its funds are expended through denominational agencies for Christian work beyond the bounds of our parish. Other parish groups sponsor similar efforts.

Many persons have discovered that the greatest satisfaction in giving comes with making designated gifts after they have fulfilled their responsibility for the Current Expense Budget and other organized activities. There are always children in our Weekday Pre-School Kindergarten, for example, whose parents cannot afford to pay all of their tuition. Their tuition is paid by anonymous donors who find real enjoyment in making it possible for a child to have the experience of attending Kindergarten. Other persons use the confidential offices of the pastor to help finance the education of promising college and graduate students, to assist a particular family in need, or to supplement the program of the parish. Many of these gifts are expended as loans which when repaid will be used to help someone else. Still other persons simply contribute to the Pastor's Discretionary Account, trusting him to use the gift in the way he deems best.

Such are the financial "facts of life" in First Church. Every serious Christian is concerned to be a responsible steward of his resources. It is evident that First Church offers every reasonable opportunity to its members to channel their gifts into Kingdom enterprises.

X.

What Else Is There to Know?

MUCH!

This *Handbook* seeks in a few pages to answer many of the questions that every member probably asks at one time or another. It cannot hope to answer all of the questions—or even to give absolutely complete answers to even a few questions. Responsible members will use the information in this *Handbook* to find more complete answers elsewhere.

One place to find them is in other printed pieces which are yours for the asking. Take the matter of history. Since First Church is the oldest church in Fort Wayne, it has significantly influenced the development of our community. In 1959 the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society published a forty-four page booklet entitled, **FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN FORT WAYNE**. This booklet is in the public library and may be obtained from the Society.

Other booklets have been published by our Church which you may obtain from any Staff member. One is **SINCE WE BELIEVE**, a pamphlet which discusses death, grief, and burial procedures in a frank manner. Another is **WEDDINGS**, which is designed to help a bride with the planning of her wedding. Still another **SYMBOLISM IN THE SANCTUARY**, which interprets many of the symbols and the stained glass windows in the Sanctuary and McMillen Chapel. The work of the parish is periodically described in leaflets and brochures. And, of course, the Annual Report tells the activities of the Session, the Boards, and the parish organizations.

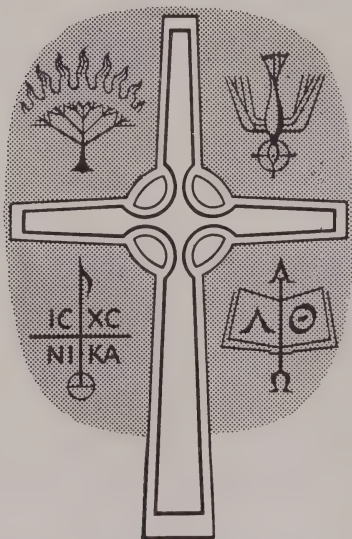


Jesus Christ

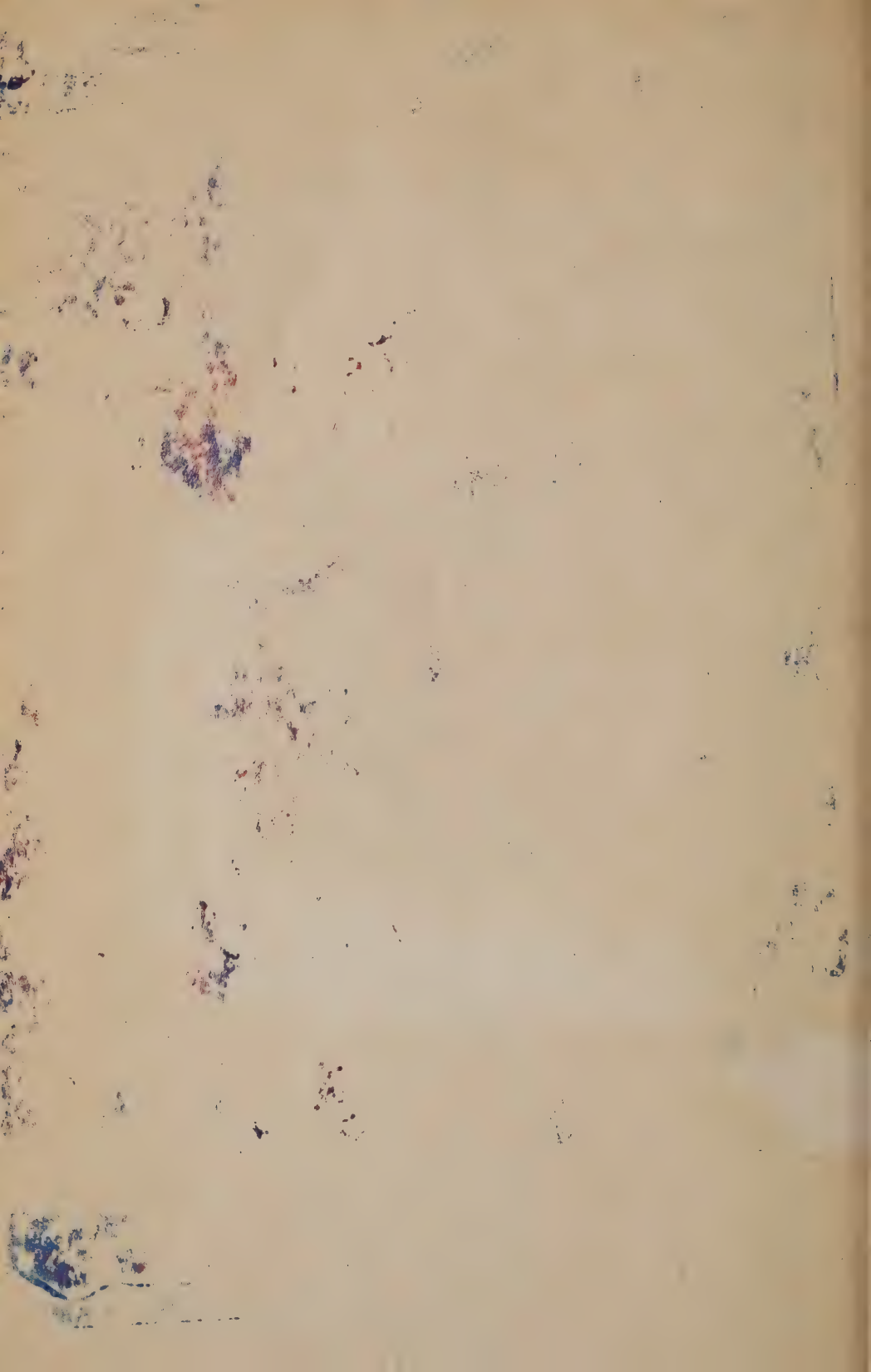
The best way to keep abreast of current happenings is to read faithfully the parish paper, which is mailed to every home about once a month, and to read the intimations in the weekly worship folders. Periodically someone remarks that an important decision has been made, far-reaching action taken, or a significant program offered about which he knew nothing, and complains that he "was never told." In no such instance, however, has the matter been unannounced either in the parish paper or the weekly worship folder or both. Often it has also been publicized in the local newspapers and over the air. The most your Session and Staff can do is to publicize events. It is up to each parishioner to read what is prepared—at least the parish paper and the weekly bulletin.

Another way to get questions answered is to see the filmed presentation of our Church. **THE CHALLENGE** is a twenty-eight minute movie, narrated by Chet Huntley, which depicts the philosophy of First Church and tells the story of our mission. It is shown to every class of new members and can be shown to any group upon request.

If you want to discuss a feature of First Church's life, by all means attend your next Neighborhood Meeting. You will find a Staff member to help with some of the answers, but you will also find fellow members who share your concerns and who will want to express their opinions. Of course, if you have a question that will not wait for a Neighborhood Meeting, by all means contact a Staff member or a member of the Session. You will find all of them anxious to interpret any and every phase of First Church's life.











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